

## MAJOR GINTER DEAD.

Career of Great Business Achievements  
and Public Usefulness Ends.

## NOBLE STRUGGLE AGAINST DISEASE.

Trouble Which Brought on Illness  
Attacked His Lungs and Heart.

## A PIONEER IN CIGARETTE-MAKING.

Successful Conduct of This Business  
Yields His Vast Fortune.

## WAS DEVOTED TO RICHMOND.

His Energies and Means Spent to Build  
Up the City.

## SKETCH OF HIS LONG, USEFUL LIFE

Outline of His Career as Merchant,  
Soldier, Banker, Manufacturer, and  
Public-Spirited Citizen—Deeds of  
Charity—Family Connections—Tri-  
butes from Friends.

Major Lewis Ginter, perhaps the richest man in Virginia, and one whose public spirit and broad charity have made his name familiar and honored throughout this city, which he loved so well, did so much to build up and beautify, is dead.

He breathed his last at 11:30 o'clock last night at Westbrook, his painful and picturesque country home a few miles to the northwest of Richmond, where the greater part of his life and crowning years of his busy, useful, and successful life had been spent. In the death of Major Ginter, which comes home to the citizens of Richmond with a sense of personal loss and bereavement and fills the hearts of his friends with profound sorrow, a patient and noble struggle against inexorable disease has ended and a friend and comrade has fallen asleep. Though his illness was long and his suffering had been great, his death was calm and serene.

During the whole of his career among us he was steadily and continuously impelled by a pure and fine ambition for the growth and upbuilding of this his adopted city. His devotion to Richmond was a passionate devotion, and in equal degree he was devoted to a high ideal of personal conduct.

## HIS LOVE FOR RICHMOND.

What Richmond owes to Major Ginter for the resources he placed at her disposal, and for many improvements, can hardly be estimated. What we owe him for these things need not be told. But the good will which prompted them should not pass unacknowledged.

To-day it may be recalled with tenderness the attachment he felt for this city as the home of his early business and the scene of his youthful exertions. He has taught us that brilliant qualities of intellect or character are not indispensable

from poverty, without being corrupted by great riches, because the soul of his nature was so generous that the very root of all evil sprang up to immeasurable good in it. To live a life of painful and palatable acquisition; to wrestle with covetousness, while climbing from early poverty to the height of what a covetous heart could desire, and then to put his foot upon his gains and their temptations, like a gladiator on a wild beast vanquished—this is the spectacle which has made the world's amphitheatre tumultuous. Nor is the show for the moment only, to be lost in the common noise. So long as men shall wrestle in the same arena, and other men look on, it shall ring in the ears of the wrestlers and nerve them to win their fight. There is no death in victories like this, for such deeds of our better nature partake of its own immortality.

## TRUTH STRONGER THAN FICTION.

There is small need of fancy in dealing with the story of the man and citizen, Lewis Ginter, for scarce any thing in fiction is more strange than the actual prose of it. The child of poor parents and humble hopes, he grew to be a potent factor in the money market of the world, and to prop up the integrity and credit of the Union with his integrity and credit. But it is not intended to deal with the wonders of that career as much as with the mind, the heart, the will, the character which wrought them. "No man," Carlyle tells us, "becomes a saint in his sleep," and there is no greater fallacy than the popular notion which often attributes success in great things to luck. There are people, it is true, who stumble into prosperity, and get place and power by what to mortal eyes seem chance. Reputation and the honors and profits which follow it are now and then waited to a man, like a bludgeon, for no better visible reason than that he happens to be out in the same wind with them. The crowd attach themselves often and cling with devotion to some singularly favored person, as burrs do to his clothing, simply, as it would appear, because he walks among them. But what seems does not necessarily represent what is, and a man must be hard to convince, if, after having used a microscope once, he be not satisfied for life that things exist and are comprehensible, though he may neither see nor understand them himself. What, therefore, may appear to be exceptions to the general truth that great results do not spring from insufficient causes are commonly found to be strictly within it. In the course of any long lifetime the logic of cause and effect is apt to vindicate itself. In this busy, stirring, jostling, interested modern society of ours, where scarcely any one occupies a pedestal, even a humbler place, but some one else goes anxiously to work to dislodge him and get there in his stead, we seldom find respect or deference, love or admiration, long yielded to any man unless there be in him which commands them. The world may daily witness its impostors and its charlatans, its trumphant great men, sham heroes, and mock saints and sages—for a little while, but they finally go down, for the most part, into the receptacle—the huge Noah's Ark—of its spurned and worthless playthings. The winds of time and contest blow away the chaff at last from the great grain floor of humanity, a blessed fact, by the by, which reconciles us to many temptations.

**CARVED HIS OWN DESTINY.**  
He was the son of highly respectable, though poor, parents, who could trace their lineage, on both sides, 200 years back, to the earliest settlers of the Dutch Colony of New Amsterdam. His brother still possesses an old-fashioned crier, which has descended as an heirloom through several generations, and serves to show that his ancestors were well to do, as such instruments were by no means in common use. Thereupon upon his own resources, which little more than a child, he lacked opportunities of study and culture which might have been afforded him, yet he came through the furnace of his early experiences well equipped to fight the battle of life and to conquer.

His career in Richmond in 1833, and was a pioneer in the notion business, though he dealt also in toys. His next venture was in the housefurnishing line, and later he became a wholesale dealer in notions, and then, at last, fortune began to smile upon him. Then he added white



MAJOR LEWIS GINTER, WHO DIED LAST NIGHT; AGED 73 YEARS.

ters of "Black Friday," and ruin stared him in the face.

## MADE HIS FORTUNE HERE.

Undaunted, however, he returned to Richmond, and formed a partnership with the late John F. Allen, and engaged in the manufacture of cigarettes, which was the foundation of his great wealth and influence.

Major Ginter was munificent and princely in his charities. He had made his money in Richmond, he said, and he would spend it here. Over 4,000 names were upon his salary list; he allowed pensions of \$50 a month to thirty old people; he educated many poor children; he gave liberally to charitable institutions, which he missed no opportunity to do good in private and personal relations. Young men, especially, brought within the sphere of his influence, found in him an ever ready and most judicious counselor—one never obtrusive or officious, but always accessible and interested.

## HIS FATAL ILLNESS.

The cause of Major Ginter's illness was diabetes, in its most virulent form. How long he had suffered from the disease is not known, but he had certainly been a victim to it for over two years. When he went to England, in August of 1895, he was met there by Mrs. Young, who was so shocked at the change in his appearance that she determined to leave him again. Five years ago Major Ginter was insured for a very large sum of money. It was a strange coincidence that he had insured his life twenty-eight years before, and upon both occasions Dr. J. B. McCaw was the examining physician. Dr. McCaw told Major Ginter

the fits of coughing grew more frequent and exhausting.

**HIS DECLINE BECAME STEADY.**  
He was taken to Bar Harbor early in the summer, having previously spent some time at Old Point in the hope that the change of air might afford him some relief, but the hope was disappointed, and he grew weaker day by day, until he was not able to walk at all, and later could not stand alone. His memory, too, began to fail him, and although he had been told of his condition, and at times seemed to realize that his end was drawing near, he would sometimes allude to his plans and the part that he proposed to take in their development in the future. Upon one occasion, when he received a message from a lady friend who possessed a fine grape vineyard, that this year's crop was a failure, and she regretted exceedingly that she was unable to send him some of the fruit, he sent word to her that he gratefully appreciated her thought of him, and he hoped in two years' time to compete with her in the matter of grape raising, as he was having a hot-house built for vines. He was unable to converse much during his stay at Bar Harbor, and on his return to "Westbrook" some weeks ago, his friends were rigidly excluded from his room, and every possible precaution was taken against noise, his dogs being sent to his Franklin-street home, and one of his servants continually stationed at his front door to answer the replies of callers, and so avoid the confusion incident to their arrival. During the last five months of his illness he lost over fifty pounds in weight, yet he insisted, in spite of his growing weakness, that he should be dressed each day, and propped up with pillows in an arm-chair, even when he was scarcely able to lift a hand. When the weather was bright and his strength would permit, he was wheeled out on his front

porch late in the afternoon to get the benefit of the fresh air and the beautiful surroundings of his lovely home, in which he took so much pride.

**LEAVES FEW NEAR RELATIVES.**  
Major Ginter never married. His nearest relative is a brother, who is a prosperous farmer in Missouri. The most intimate of his connections have been the sons and daughters of his much-beloved sister, who died at Westbrook a few years ago; Mr. George Arents, of New York, who has three children, and Misses Josephine and Grace Arents, and Mrs. Albert Young, who also has three children.

## THE STORY OF HIS EARLY LIFE.

Born in New York, but Engaged in Business Here When Quite Young. The story of Major Ginter's life is as

interesting as his achievements are remarkable. He was born on the 24th of April, 1824, in New York city. He was of highly respectable parents, his progenitors being among the earliest Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam. He was connected with the Knickerbocker stock. The family name was originally Ginter, but was changed by Major Ginter's grandfather to its present form.

He inherited from his ancestry a constitution singularly sound and vigorous in all its parts—physical, intellectual, and moral. His entire organization—body, intellect, affections, conscience, and will—was beautiful, active, and symmetrical, a remarkable example of the "mens sano in corpore sano." It is not surprising, then, to find that his progenitors, in all the lines of descent which can be traced, were of strong mental and moral characteristics. His father died while his son Lewis was still in his infancy, and his mother a few years later, and his early years were spent under the guidance and direction of his sister, twelve years older than he, who was known in Richmond as Mrs. Arents, and who died at Major Ginter's beautiful home, "Westbrook," soon after it was completed. She lavished upon him the utmost love and devotion, which he returned in kind, and it was the fact that she had died at "Westbrook" which made him so anxious to return from Bar Harbor and spend his last hours beneath the same roof.

The circumstances of the Ginters were by no means easy, and the subject of this sketch had few advantages in the way of education. He went to work as soon as he was able to earn money, and a natural instinct and inborn taste for the artistic led him to seek employment in stores where fancy articles and art fabrics were for sale.

## COURT FORTUNE IN RICHMOND.

Early in life he started out to seek

beginning to a firm and lasting friendship.

## HE DEALT IN TOYS.

Major Ginter first opened a toy store on lower Main street. An illuminative touch has been given to his early struggles here by one of his earliest customers. She writes:

In the early fall of 1845 there was on Main street, in the square below the banks, a little shop with one short counter, and the rear half cut off for a "living room." Above the door was the sign, "Lewis Ginter," and inside the shop, on counter and shelves, were toys—pure and simple, but of every kind and variety that a childish mind could dream of or a childish heart desire. But the children of Richmond were accustomed to buying their toys where they bought their cakes and candy and the grown-up folks were accustomed to buying theirs where they bought their dry goods or their wooden household-ware. So that few ventured into this lonely, deserted-looking shop, at the door of which was often seen standing a pale, slim, lonely-looking young man, who had come from nobody knew where. There was many a childish heart, however, that longed to have a nearer view of those wonderful toys, and at last, one day in a group of children, one who was bolder than the rest, and whose heart pined that disconsolate figure in the doorway, prevailed upon her nurse to go in with her and let her spend her money there.

She was welcomed with enthusiasm, and all the wonders of that wonderful little place were placed upon the counter for her inspection and entertainment, although she carefully explained that she had only one silver half dollar to expend. There were boxes of paste-board with glass in front, and behind the glass a fairy-like dancer, a bear, a monkey, a wonderful little old man or woman, that jumped about and nodded his head and winked its eyes, etc., etc., all of which were set in motion by having the boxes turned over sideways a few times and then set down, and lo! one by one, they were immediately performing the most wonderful antics, until the little counter was lined with them, and as they stopped they were each started again, and soon that counter was crowded with nurses and children. There were, in the mean time, piled on the counter seesaws, that when started seemed never to stop; miniature hand-organs that would make music as long as a little wire handle was turned; whole troops of tin soldiers; big dolls, little dolls, and middle-sized dolls; wooden jointed dolls that could sit down, or lie down, or stand up; dolls snugly tucked away in cradles, that as long as they were rocked would cry, and when wended after wonder had been displayed, there was laid in the arms of the little girl who had first ventured in a lovely, waxen doll, with the loveliest blue eyes and golden curls of real hair, both almost matching her own, which likeness was called to her attention by the little salesman; but, above all, that doll could shut and open her eyes—the first of its kind ever seen in Richmond. It is needless to say that that wonderful doll went out of the shop in that little girl's arms, for when it was found that her half dollar would not suffice for the purchase, her generous little brother, Jack, added his, and I shrewdly suspect that the salesman donated all of his profits, or, perhaps, even more. I think it is safe to say that not a cent was carried out of that shop by either nurses or children, for all went out with either hands or arms full.

## THE BEGINNING OF HIS SUCCESS.

At that day in Richmond the churches each held a fancy fair during the winter in the court-room of the old City Hall, and all of the working members of all of the churches helped each other to hold their fairs. At those fairs Mrs. Judge Clifton always kept the post-office, and the fair for the Monumental church generally opened the season. This was in active preparation at the time of that memorable visit to the toyshop, and Mrs. Clifton, having her sympathies drawn upon by her little daughter's account of the poor, friendless, young shopkeeper, determined to have a toy table at the fair in addition to her post-office. Her arrangements therefore were soon made, for with her to resolve was to act, and during the fair every day young Mr. Ginter would bring his toys and arrange them most artistically upon the beautifully-decorated table, all ready for the fair attendants, each one ticketed at a price that would

little toyshop on Main street, with "Lewis Ginter" over the door.

This was the beginning of Mr. Ginter's success in Richmond. After awhile, "notions" were added to his toys—a larger shop was needed. Later on, the toys were displaced by household-ware and trimmings, and the shop became a store.

This is far enough for my memory to follow him. How long Mr. Ginter had been in Richmond before that first day I went into his shop I really do not know, for I was a very small child at the time. It may have been only a week or two, or a month or two, perhaps, longer, but the point at which my memory of him begins is that fall, the first time we posse of nurses and children went down town after returning from the summit sojourn at the plantation, quite this desolate figure standing at the door of that little toyshop caught my eye and appealed to my pitying heart, and it may have been only a few days before I persuaded my nurse to allow me to go in, or it may have been a few weeks. A child's mind does not measure time very accurately, and the way I fix the date of the year so exactly is that it happened the fall before the death of my dearly-loved brother Jack, who was drowned in July, 1846, and for whose sake I treasured that doll for many a year, and also a little jointed doll, the remains of which I have to-day.

## HIS SUBSEQUENT VENTURES.

Mr. Ginter, when he had accumulated sufficient capital, branched out into the housefurnishing business. He had a neat and pretty store almost opposite the St. Charles Hotel, and here he displayed in an eminent degree that taste, the love of the beautiful in the number, variety, and arrangement of the pretty things he collected and exhibited for sale. He was very successful in this line of business, and moved to a larger store on Henry street, the firm now occupied by the Western Union Telegraph Company's office. Here he did a very large retail business until 1866, when he sold out to Mr. Thomas A. Bulkeley.

By intense labor, though not exactly in the line of other men, he was able after running on till evening met the morning; by that herculean labor which brings the golden apples from the garden of Hesperides, he brought himself steadily up to the front line of the success of a merchant. This was the one secret of his astonishing success.

His next venture was in the wholesale notion business with Mr. John F. Alvey, as a partner. Their store was on Fourteenth, then known as Fowles' store, in the line of other men, he was able after running on till evening met the morning; by that herculean labor which brings the golden apples from the garden of Hesperides, he brought himself steadily up to the front line of the success of a merchant. This was the one secret of his astonishing success.

At the end of one year Mr. Kent retired, and Mr. Ginter associated his nephew, Mr. George Arents, now treasurer of the American Tobacco Company, with him, the firm-name being changed to Ginter, Alvey & Arents.

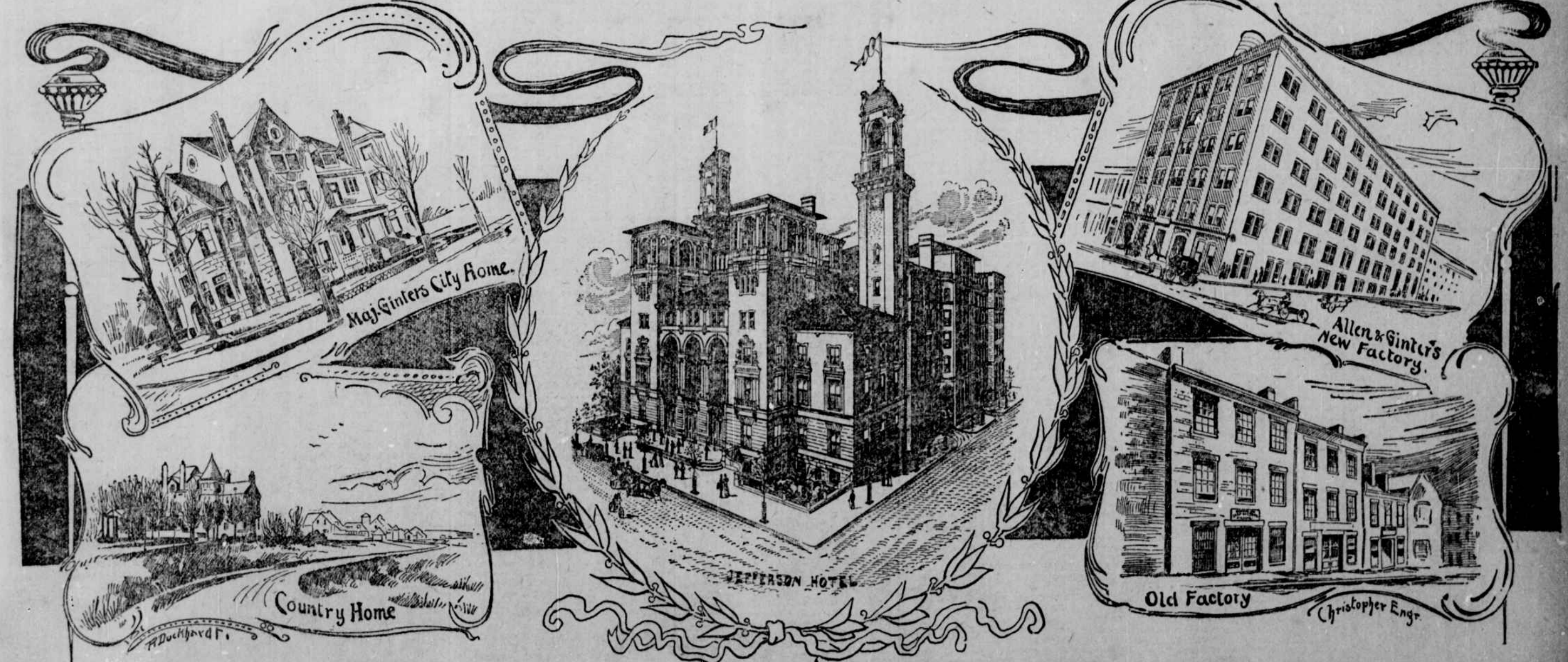
It was the largest dry-goods and notions-house south of Philadelphia, and the business, which continued until the war broke out, was one of the largest in the city. Some idea of its scope, as well as of the generosity of Major Ginter, can be gathered from the fact that when war was declared, Mr. Ginter was worth \$200,000, which he sacrificed to the cause of the South, and even after the close of the war he never asked one of his creditors to pay the amount they owed to him.

## A GOOD WAR RECORD.

Mr. Ginter, as was noted above, came of an old Dutch family, and was born with a very decided antipathy to the "Yankee."

So far as public fame is more immediately concerned, Major Ginter's war record stands out in bold relief from his other services. He was among the first to prepare for the impending conflict, with a presence that now seems like an inspiration, and with a vigor which could scarcely have been increased. From a strenuous advocate of peace, he suddenly threw himself into the exigencies of the war. The eternal principle of right was trampled under foot; and then it was to the very soul of clemency to appeal to small shot.

Major Ginter entered the Confederate



## MATERIAL EVIDENCES OF MAJOR GINTER'S USEFUL AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN RICHMOND—HIS HOMES AND FACTORIES

to make men useful or honored, and that the real benefactors of their kind are not they at the sound of whose name the world stands still. He has shown how the humble and the poor may lift themselves among the great ones of the earth by industry, integrity, and independence, and how the rich may keep above their riches by clinging to the treasure of their souls. He has taught how the simple dignity of manhood may rise superior to rank and station, and that all the grandeur of power lies in its uses. He has embodied wealth by his touch, as knights give knighthood, and established as the canon of its primogeniture that humanity is its firstborn.

goods, Saxony woollens, and ribbons to his stock in trade, and his business increased to such an extent, that his increased the outburst of the war was worth less than \$50,000 a year. He was probably the first man in the South to raise the cry against the "middleman" and always bought direct from the manufacturer, and always travelling to Europe regularly to make his purchases.

When war was declared, he turned his back upon his business interests, and entered then very considerably, and rendered at Appomattox and went East to retrieve his fortunes. He was connected with a large banking and brokers' institution in Wall Street, but became heavily involved in the financial disaster that his latter diagnosis was decidedly more favorable than the former.

The first apprehensions of Major Ginter's friends were excited in March of last year, for about that time he began to lose strength and vitality. His breaking down, which had been gradual up to the time of Mr. John Pope's death, then became very rapid. He sought relief in Europe, but found none, and his friends were greatly shocked at the change in him, which was so apparent on his return from this, his last Continental tour. His disease then attacked his lungs and his heart, and his left lung succumbed to its inroads. He suffered from severe coughing spells, and frequently said to his friends, "Why don't you give me something that will cure this cough of mine." This was another fatal phase of the disease, for as he grew weaker

his fortune, his sister having married, and he found his way to Richmond early in 1892. He had a small sum of money when he arrived here, and an interesting story is told of his first night in the city. He sought temporary lodgings, and secured them in a house where he was compelled to share his bedroom with Mr. Shafer, the father of his present private secretary. The two young men were, of course, strangers to each other, and both were retiring disposition, and exceedingly reluctant. Each was possessed of a small sum of money, representing all their worldly possessions, and each was inspired with an instinctive dread and mistrust of the other, and both kept wide awake all through the night, fearing that the other would rob him under cover of the darkness. It was a strange and humorous

give the fair, as well as himself, a fair profit, and each night the closing hour would find that table empty. Then there were mechanical toys that were exhibited in little booths kept by little girls, the exhibition money going to the fair, and the toy being raffled off at the close for the benefit of the owner. One was really a wonderful affair—a little, old cobble, with mechanical articles, a nose, set on his bench in his shop and really made—or seemed to make—a shoe, pausing occasionally to glance up at the spectators, nod his head, and wink his eyes in a most knowing and comical way.

At all the fancy fairs that winter Mrs. Clifton's toy table held as prominent a place almost as her post-office, and before the winter ended business was brisk and prosperity established in the

When General Jackson won his celebrated flank movement around Pope, August 23, 1862, after the army left Rappahannock river and on the first day's march to Salina (Quadrangle) service as commissioned quartermaster in General Joseph R. Anderson's Brigade; after Anderson's transfer he was attached to General Thomas's Brigade, Major-General A. P. Hill's Division, where he served until the close of the war, sometimes as quartermaster and sometimes as assistant adjutant-general. He went into every fight as an aide. He was a brave and fearless soldier, and surrendered at Appomattox.